

To the members of the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission:

I have been teaching in the Windham Public School system for over 30 years. I started teaching ESL to new students from Puerto Rico, Mexico and Latin America at the elementary and middle school levels, moving later up to the high school.

Through all these years I have come to realize that students with no knowledge of English who are entering school in the USA for the very first time face many challenges. As I also taught in the English only classroom I recognized the benefit of learning literacy skills in one's native language to become more proficient in second language literacy skills .

As a bilingual educator, I believe that it is a must to provide quality bilingual instruction to all Emergent Bilingual students in our schools and statewide, the Common Core State Standards should be aligned to accommodate for Emergent Bilingual student success and not failure.

Emergent Bilingual student population in the public schools increased by 51% between '97-'98 and '08-'09. Today one out of every ten students is an Emergent Bilingual and by 2525 they will make up 25% of the population in the United States.

I returned this year still passionate to continue to challenge and support our students in light of the new trend of the Common Core State Standards emphasis and the reduction in Bilingual Education. My concern is that Emergent Bilingual students will not achieve their full potential. I support a Developmental Bilingual program as it has been shown to be an appropriate pedagogy because it allows them to attain literacy as they strive to learn English.

Ines Rolon

203 Southridge Drive

Willimantic CT 06226